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Hello,

We are delighted that you have decided to participate in another season of debate programming with Chicago Debates. We continue to seek to bridge the opportunity gap for Chicago Public Schools students by providing them with an after-school program that supports their academic, career, and leadership success. Through our partnership with Chicago Public Schools, Academic Competitions, we are able to serve over 1700 students across 90+ schools throughout the district.

We have spent the entire summer preparing for what will be an exciting and unprecedented year. While the COVID-19 pandemic has caused many businesses and organizations to close and pause their activities and operations, our organization has found a way to pivot. We are confident that with your support and intentional collaboration with our exclusive partner, Chicago Public School (CPS), we will experience one of the most meaningful debate seasons ever.

This year’s resolution: The United States federal government should enact substantial criminal justice reform in the United States in one or more of the following: forensic science, policing, sentencing; is a relevant topic that we know will energize our students and further equip them to become engaged citizens.

Informed by the guidance received from our experienced debate coaches, the National Association of Urban Debate Leagues (NAUDL), and CPS – Academic Competitions we have developed a virtual debate plan that will ensure students’ experience with Chicago Debates programming is engaging and safe. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to serve you this year.

With gratitude,

Dr. Toinette Gunn  
Executive Director  
Chicago Debates

Anthony J. Bolden II  
Director of Programs  
Chicago Debates
Hello Parents of Chicago Debates,

We are so humbled that you have entrusted us with a portion of your child's personal and academic development. For over 20 years, Chicago Debates has helped students find their voices through the wonderful activity of policy debate. While debate has long been available to schools in wealthier suburban districts, Chicago Debates is creating access to this transformative activity for some of Chicago’s most marginalized students.

Founded in 1995 by community leaders led by Illinois Supreme Court Justice Seymour Simon, Chicago Debates was one of the first urban debate leagues established in a national movement that has seen debate expand to 21 other cities across the country. Since partnering with Chicago Public Schools in 1997, Chicago Debates has grown from five schools to nearly 100 middle and high schools – making us the largest urban policy debate league in the country.

Our data shows that students who participate in debate improve academically, develop communication and critical thinking skills, build their confidence, create a life-long community and expand their knowledge of the world’s most complex and pressing issues.

Debate is a transformational activity. We envision a world in which Chicago youth are empowered to find their voice, succeed in college and career and become leaders in their community.

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted the world as we know it, causing many nonprofits and businesses alike to cancel events, programs, and fundraisers. Furthermore, health professionals continue to advise that this virus will likely pose a threat to us for much longer than anyone would like. However, Chicago Debates in collaboration with our exclusive partner, Chicago Public Schools, has created a fully virtual debate programming model.

This means that students will not have to wait until next year to participate in this trajectory shifting activity. Our Program Officers for School Support are already in the process of assisting our debate coaches to ensure they are prepared to offer the most engaging, online, extra-curricular experience.

In the following pages, you will find information regarding our debate calendar, tournament model, online troubleshooting guidance and other important online engagement guidelines to ensure our students are safe while participating in debate.

We look forward to supporting you and your student this school year. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Anthony Bolden, Director of Programs for Chicago Debates (abolden@chicagodebates.org | 312.300.3442)

Thank you!
**Guide to Virtual Judging**

**Pre Tournament Requirements:** Prior to judging your first tournament of the season, there are several items to be completed:

- **Background Checks:** You will need to complete background checks for Chicago Debates and Chicago Public Schools. Our Volunteer & Outreach Manager, Lauren Hince, will contact volunteers about completing these applications.

- **Payment:** If volunteers would like to receive compensation for their time, they will need to complete one W-9 per school year and a Chicago Debates payment form after every tournament.

- **Training:** Given how different debate will look this season, we ask all volunteers (new and returning) to complete a training session with the Volunteer & Outreach Manager. There will be separate training sessions for new and returning volunteers hosted over Zoom. Dates for training will be posted on the Chicago Debates website and emailed to volunteers registered for the tournaments.

- **Tabroom:** All judges will need to have a Tabroom account. If the volunteer is new to judging, they can contact the Volunteer & Outreach Manager for information on setting this up.

**Tournament Check-In and Judges Lounge:**

We will have a virtual judges lounge hosted on Google Meets for judges to check-in throughout the day. All judges should check-in with the Volunteer & Outreach Manager by joining the virtual judges lounge at the beginning of their shift. We will host the judge meeting in this room and go over any last-minute training or questions. This is how we will know which judges are present before pairing rounds.

**Judge Captains:** In the event the Volunteer & Outreach Manager is not available, Judge Captains will be a great resource to answer any questions. Judge Captains will be located in the virtual judges lounge and will serve as a resource for anyone. If the Volunteer & Outreach Manager is unavailable for the day, they will provide the Judge Captain’s information prior to the tournament.
**Virtual Judging:** Rounds will be hosted on Google Meets. A link to each Google Meets room will be provided on the round pairing in Tabroom. If a judge is unable to find their virtual room, the tournament staff will have an excel sheet with links to all rooms. Below are a couple reminders and things to note for virtual judging:

- Rounds should consist of the four debaters and a judge. There should be no extra spectators in the virtual room. Judges have the authority to remove any extra people from the Google Meets room. The exception to this is if the judge is not a CPS employee. *Per CPS guidelines, students cannot be alone in a room without a CPS employee.*
- In addition to having a link to a Google Meets room, there will also be a phone number provided. Judges should instruct all debaters to write down this phone number in the event of a technical issue. This phone number is unique to each round.
- Each team will be provided ten extra minutes to use if there is a technical issue. If the issue cannot be resolved, debaters should call in to their Google Meets number (located on their pairing and provided by the judge) to deliver their speech.
- If a judge runs into a technical issue they should call the Google Voice Number to reach tournament staff. The Google Voice Number will be provided in their judge packet and during the judge meeting. If a judge cannot reach tournament staff they should contact the Volunteer & Outreach Manager or Judge Captain.

**Post Tournament Requirements:** Once volunteers have finished their shift they should check-in with the Volunteer & Outreach Manager or Judge Captain in the virtual judges lounge to confirm all paperwork and hours have been recorded. After every tournament, volunteers will be provided a survey to provide feedback on the tournament.

*For any questions regarding volunteering with us, please reach out to our Volunteer & Outreach Manager, Lauren Hince, [lhince@chicagodebates.org](mailto:lhince@chicagodebates.org) – (312) 300-3450.*
Coaches Guide to Holding Virtual Practices and Recruitment

General Tips for Virtual Practices:

1. Make sure to keep lectures to less than 10-15 minutes.
2. Use small group work. For example, ask different groups of students to go through pieces of evidence in the 1ac, and report back to the group with summaries of evidence.
3. Have a “question of the day” to start practice to get students speaking and interested in debating. This could include questions about the topic, like “what do you think about protests against the criminal justice system?” or just questions to get students thinking and make arguments, like “if you were selected for a trip to Mars, what would be the best personal item to bring with you?”
4. Utilize videos like the demo debate to illustrate how to use the core files, how to flow, how to give rebuttals, etc.
5. Integrate as many active learning activities as possible that require students to talk, for example, having students give short speeches (~1 minute), on the topic you are discussing at practice that day.
6. Use Kahoots reviewing concepts from the previous practice to get students engaged.
7. Have varsity members participate in a practice debate and ask the rest of the team to flow the debate and write up a ballot, with a prize for the best flow and most thoughtful ballot.
8. Re-register for Teach Debate and use the updated resources there to find videos and activities. Ask your program officer for specific recommendations.
9. If you’re having difficulty getting students to speak in practice, ask them to respond with emojis (like thumbs up or thumbs down) or short answers in the chat.
10. Make sure to let students take a 5-minute break every 20-30 minutes to allow them to socialize and recharge.
11. Have a general check-in with students at the beginning or end of practice asking how they are feeling and if they need to get something off their chest, vent, complain, ask for help, etc.
12. Ask your program officer to come to practice and bring an exciting activity, especially before tournaments.
13. Share your screen and use as many visuals as possible. For example, make a powerpoint if you have time, or just pull up a Google Doc and type in it like you would write on the board.
14. Use silly examples as a teaching mechanism to get students to stay engaged. For example, teach counter-plans using a fun analogy of different fast food places.
15. Use documentaries or interesting videos to introduce students to the topic. Many exist on YouTube, including the full documentary 13th.
16. Create a team Google Doc and ask students to type 2-3 questions in the document as “homework” due before the next practice to help you check for understanding.
17. Take a look at the curricular schedule made for CDSI. You can think of the plan for each day as being 1-3 practices. The schedule was designed to include all concepts that students should know before a tournament at each level.
General Tips for Virtual Recruitment and Retention

1. If your school holds a virtual club fair, have your debate team participate.

2. Create a list of reasons why debate is especially intriguing this year, and talk to your principal about sending this list out to freshman students and/or parents. For example, the topic is highly relevant to the lives of students and gives them language to speak about critiques of the criminal justice system; debate has the social benefit of the opportunity to still build community and teamwork at a time when team activities like sports are limited; debate teaches students to use their voice at a time when they are experiencing unprecedented stress, etc.

3. Reach out to other teachers about the unique benefits of debate this year, and ask them to please share with their students about the debate team, or ask them to give you a list of students who they think would excel in debate.

4. Have a virtual parent information night, and ask the parents of current debaters to attend and speak briefly about the benefits of debate.

5. Ask students to bring a friend to practice.

6. Give current debaters titles like President, Vice-President, etc. In addition, appoint students to be “debate ambassadors,” who focus on speaking about debate in each of their classes.

7. Collaborate with students in asking what they think is the best way to get other students involved. Students best know the interests and struggles of their peers during virtual education, and they will feel respected if involved in the recruitment strategy.

8. Share an advertisement for the debate team with the school newspaper and the parent newsletter.

For all “general tips,” please ask your program officer if you have questions about how these tips could be applied to the specific context of your school.
Chicago Debates Virtual Tournament Model

Chicago Debates Community,

As we embark on our first-ever virtual debate year, one of the biggest challenges for our team was figuring out what a virtual tournament model would look like. With input from our coaches, debaters and staff, we have come up with our 2020-2021 virtual tournament model. We hope our virtual tournaments will not only be educational for our debaters, but also a place for students to grow and connect as a team and as a community.

Below you will find our detailed outline of what tournaments will look like from virtually checking-in to hanging out in each school’s own squad room, and even what our policy will be around technology challenges that come up during a debate round.

We hope that this guide will help shape your understanding of what coaches, debaters, and volunteers can expect when attending one of our virtual tournaments this year.

As always if you have any questions, comments or concerns, feel free to reach out to your program officer for support.

Thank you!
High School Tournaments

Blue Conference
Ayesha Patel
apatel@chicagodebates.org
773.934.6757

Silver Conference
Victoria Yonter
vyonter@chicagodebates.org
312.300.3449

Maroon Conference
Jazmine Mercado
jmercado@chicagodebates.org
312.300.3448

Red Conference
Flynn Makuch
fmakuch@chicagodebates.org
312.300.3444

Middle School Tournaments

Grant Park Conference
Flynn Makuch
fmakuch@chicagodebates.org
312.300.3444

Chicago River Conference
Jazmine Mercado
jmercado@chicagodebates.org
312.300.3448

Lake Michigan Conference
Ayesha Patel
apatel@chicagodebates.org
773.934.6757

Navy Pier Conference
Victoria Yonter
vyonter@chicagodebates.org
312.300.3449
**High School Conferences**

**Tournament 1**
October 2–3 (RCC)
October 10 (Red and Maroon Conferences)
October 16–17 (Blue and Silver Conferences)

**Tournament 2**
November 13–14 (RCC, Blue, Silver Conferences)
November 21 (Red and Maroon Conferences)

**Tournament 3**
December 4–5 (Blue/RCC Joint Tournament)
December 11–12 (Silver Conference)
December 12 (Red/Maroon Joint Tournament)

**Tournament 4**
January 8–9 (Silver/RCC Joint Tournament)
January 22–23 (Blue Conference) January 23 (Red and Maroon Conferences)

**Tournament 5 - Conference Championships**
January 29–31 (RCC)
February 19–20 (Blue and Silver Conferences)
February 27 (Red and Maroon Conferences)

**Tournament 6 - High School City Championship**
March 13–14 (All High School Conferences)

**Tournament 7 - Community Open**
April 24 (Blue, Silver, Maroon, Red Conferences)

*Invitation Only Tournaments*
October 24, 2020 – Citi Financial Literacy Debates
March 6, 2021 – Mayer Brown Urban Nationals Qualifier
April 10, 2021 – McDermott Will and Emery Novice Invitational
Late April/Early May – Allstate Tournament

**Middle School Conferences**

**Tournament 1**
October 24, 2020
Grant Park Conference
Chicago River Conference
Lake Michigan Conference
Navy Pier Conference

**Tournament 2**
December 5, 2020
Grant Park Conference
Chicago River Conference
Lake Michigan Conference
Navy Pier Conference

**Tournament 3**
January 16, 2021
Grant Park Conference
Chicago River Conference
Lake Michigan & Navy Pier Joint Tournament

**Tournament 4 Conference Championships**
February 13, 2021
Grant Park Conference
Chicago River Conference
Lake Michigan Conference
Navy Pier Conference

**Tournament 5 - Middle School City Championship**
March 6, 2021
All Conferences

*All tournament dates are subject to change.*
Registration
Registering debaters before the day of the tournament will be important now more than ever. Your Program Officer will send out a link at least 2-weeks prior to the tournament for you to register your team on Tabroom.

Tabroom
We will be using Tabroom again as our platform for tournaments this year, which includes registering your team and accessing ballots to judge rounds if need be. Feel free to check out our Tabroom Guide for a refresher on how to use Tabroom here: Tabroom Guide

Google Meets
We will be using Google Meets as our platform to host tournaments this year. Hopefully this will be easiest for debaters and coaches to use during tournaments since that is the platform used during virtual learning. Just like a normal debate round, there will be a judge and two debate teams in each Google Meets room. Per CPS guidelines, students are not to be left alone in a Google Meets room without a CPS employee present. Tournament Directors will be acting as the CPS employee in each debate room and should be in each debate room whenever students are present throughout the tournament.

Core Files
Core Files can be accessed via our website at Resources.ChicagoDebates.org/Evidence/. The Core Files have been converted into Google Documents and sectioned off into individual folders for easier access and use during debate rounds for students. You can also find links to three short videos on how to use digital debate files on Google Documents this year in the Drive as well.

Google Sheets with Rooms
To access virtual rooms at tournaments this year, we will be placing all the Google Meets links with the pairings on a Google Sheet for coaches and debaters to access. To get to their team’s squad room or to get into their debates, debaters will simply just have to click the link on the Google Sheet.
Before the tournament, we will be emailing the Google Sheet link to coaches to send to their students. We will also have the link posted on our Resources.ChicagoDebates.org website (though access will be restricted to CPS emails and those specifically added).

We will be sharing this spreadsheet with our CPS coaches, community coaches, as well as our judges and debaters so they are able to get into their virtual room. This Google Sheet will only be viewable for those logged into a CPS email account, or if they are specifically added by Chicago Debates to be able to view. If anyone else needs access, let us know! The spreadsheet will look something like this the day of the tournament.

School Packets
The Tournament Director will email each head coach a school packet a few days prior to the tournament, which will include important documents such as the schedule, argument limits, link to the Google Sheet with virtual rooms for the tournament, number for Tournament HelpLine, etc.

Spectators
If your students are not debating in a particular round (due to a bye or during an elimination round) we encourage them to watch debate rounds to learn and improve their skills!

If a student wants to watch a round, they must have consent from all the debaters and the judge to watch any round they are not assigned. While asking consent of round participants, they should also state that they are a debater who will be watching the round. During the round, they should be muted with their camera off. This will help prevent problems with audio and video quality for the participants.

Any non-CPS spectators must be approved by the tournament director, prior to the tournament.
Day-Of Virtual Debate Tournament

Morning Check-In

School Squad Room

- Just like your team would come to a debate tournament together and claim a table in the cafeteria for your school, we will be mirroring a similar set-up but with a virtual squad room!
- In the school packet sent out to head coaches prior to the tournament, you will find the link to your school's squad room. We will also have the squad rooms listed in the Google Sheet with the pairings. This is where all your debaters should meet first thing in the morning the day of the tournament.
- Your school's squad room will be a Google Meets room that you and your debaters can use for the duration of the tournament. If your team wants to have lunch together, if one of your students is lost or confused, or if there is extra down time where your team wants to talk with one another, they can use their squad room!

School Check-In

- Your school's squad room is also where we will be conducting school check-in for the tournament. Each coach will be in charge of checking in their debaters and communicating any last minute changes in your roster to the tournament director.
- Please refer down below as to how communication will work with the Tournament Director throughout the tournament.

Morning Assembly

Just like at a traditional tournament, we will also be having a session for a morning assembly. This is where the Tournament Director will provide any important updates about the tournament, a chance for all teams to come together as a community, and a chance for everyone to get excited to kick off the tournament.

Students are first to meet with their teams in their school's squad room and then move over to the morning assembly once it is time to do so. Once the Morning Assembly is done, students
Each team will be given 10 minutes of Tech Time to use during each debate round. This will be a running time that, if an issue occurs, debaters can use to try to fix the problem. For example, if they need to restart their computer they can use their Tech Time. *We strongly encourage all debaters before their round starts to write down the Google Number to call into their round on a piece of paper in case a tech issue arises and they need to call into the debate round. This number will be available on the Google Sheet with the pairings. If they’ve used all their Tech Time or after their 10 minutes is up and they still haven’t been able to fix the tech problem, their partner will be given the chance to finish the debate as a maverick.

Communication for Tournament
All communication this year for tournaments will be handled through each conference's Google Voice number. Coaches, students and judges can text this number to quickly get help.

This is how we will conduct morning check-in, offer help throughout the tournament, etc.

As noted above, the number for each tournament will be sent out prior to the tournament.

Pairings
As mentioned, students and coaches will be able to view the pairings of the tournament via a Google Sheet. Your Tournament Director will share a Google Spreadsheets that will have the pairings for the debate round as well as the link to the virtual room that your debaters need to go into prior to the tournament.

Tech Time
Being virtual this year, we know technology issues are inevitable. Below is how we will be handling a technology issue that occurs during a debate round.

- Each team will be given 10 minutes of Tech Time to use during each debate round. This will be a running time that, if an issue occurs, debaters can use to try to fix the problem. For example, if they need to restart their computer they can use their Tech Time. *We strongly encourage all debaters before their round starts to write down the Google Number to call into their round on a piece of paper in case a tech issue arises and they need to call into the debate round. This number will be available on the Google Sheet with the pairings. If they’ve used all their Tech Time or after their 10 minutes is up and they still haven’t been able to fix the tech problem, their partner will be given the chance to finish the debate as a maverick.
Day–Of Virtual Debate Tournament (cont.)

- If their partner isn’t comfortable doing that, they will forfeit the round.
- If during a debate round, a judge has technology issues and is unable to continue the debate, it will be a double win for both sides of the debate.

Surveys
We will be collecting survey data throughout each tournament to continue to improve coaches, debaters and judges' experience overall.

We will be sending out the link for everyone to fill out the survey prior to the award assembly as well as emailing it out afterwards so everyone gets a chance to fill it out.

Award Assembly
We will be hosting a short award ceremony at the completion of the debate tournament. Links to Google Forms for the speciality awards (Outstanding Adjudicator, Ethos, Robin Williams, and the Shout Out Award) will be sent out to coaches and debaters at the beginning of the tournament.

Everyone can find the link to the award assembly on the Google Sheet.
Hello Debaters!

This year has brought forth many challenges, but we are excited to be able to continue operating virtually. Although tournaments will be virtual, we will try our best to emulate the excitement of in-person tournaments.

As tournament season approaches, here is a helpful checklist to use prior to any tournaments you will be attending:

☐ Make sure you and your parent or guardian have completed the student application: bit.ly/cdstudentapp

☐ Make sure your computer has the latest software update.

☐ Close all of your tabs. You do not need them all, only have important tabs open (i.e. Tabroom, files, etc.)

☐ Be sure to restart your computer the night before the tournament to make sure it will run more smoothly.

☐ Decide with your partner which mode of communication you will use in-round. Some options: A running Google doc, creating a separate Google Meet, FaceTime, Discord chat, etc.

☐ Make sure to bookmark the Google Sheet with the tournament links! If you have tech issues or get kicked out of a Google Meets room, you can refer to this for where you need to be.

☐ Make sure to save the Google HelpLine number for any issues/questions/concerns you may have during the tournament.

☐ Have a backup option ready in case of audio issues: One option is to call in from your phone and to use your computer for video.

☐ Set an alarm for the tournament! Get some rest and start the morning off with some positive affirmations!
Virtual Program Guide
2020–2021

Our Team

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